

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Alpena FRO Accomplishment Report

## Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

### Service Surveys Lake Huron Lake Trout Reefs for Predaceous Round Goby



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alpena Fishery Resources Office (FRO) surveyed three historical lake trout spawning reefs in northern Lake Huron for the presence of the exotic round goby (goby). The goby is an invasive nuisance fish species that negatively impacts native species where they are found through their aggressive nature, competition for food and habitat, egg predation, and rapid proliferation in waters where they become established. Goby have been detected in nearshore and offshore areas of the Great Lakes; however their distribution has not been defined. Due to their abundance, habitat preference, and their predation on eggs, they may be a severe detriment to lake trout rehabilitation efforts in the Great Lakes. Lake trout rehabilitation in northern Lake Huron will require

repopulation of historically important spawning reefs. Information on presence/absence of goby on those reefs is essential for determining possible impediments to the rehabilitation effort. In order to meet this need, the Alpena FRO used setlines to examine three northern reefs for the presence of goby on August 4. The reefs examined were Spectacle Reef, Raynolds Reef, and Rubins Hump. Goby were not found on any of the reefs despite the presence of goby in the nearby Cheboygan River. Lake trout assessment activities conducted by partner offices and Alpena FRO will help determine current spawning activities at these reefs and aid in determining the potential impacts of goby on those stocks. This project was funded in part by the Service Challenge Cost Share Grant Program. The Service is responsible for aquatic nuisance species control and monitoring, meeting federal trust responsibilities to Great Lakes tribal governments, and native species restoration for lake trout in the Great Lakes. In a project that addressed all three goals, three northern Lake Huron historical lake trout spawning reefs were examined for the presence of round goby, a predaceous aquatic nuisance fish species. The information will assist in the overall lake trout rehabilitation effort in Lake Huron.

*Anjanette K. Bowen*

### Lake Sturgeon work in the St. Lawrence River May Apply to the St. Clair River

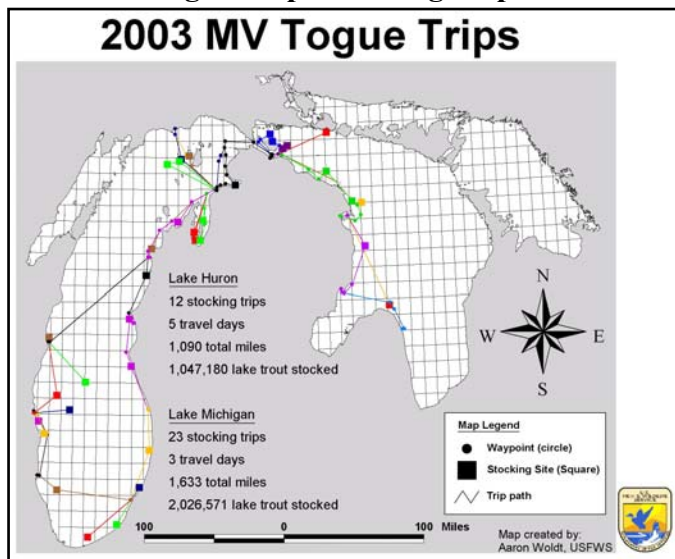
Fishery Biologist James Boase from the Alpena FRO and Biologist Bruce Manny from USGS Great Lakes Science Center visited Montreal, Quebec on July 20-23 to learn about lake sturgeon recovery efforts taking place on the St. Lawrence River. Boase worked with Quebec Biologist Michel La Haye locating and sampling juvenile lake sturgeon at two locations in the St Lawrence River. In addition, Boase visited two natural and one artificial lake sturgeon spawning sites. One of the primary goals of the visit was to learn about the habitats required by juvenile lake sturgeon and apply that information to the



upcoming research that will be taking place on the St. Clair River. The second goal was to learn about the spawning habitats required by adult lake sturgeon and apply that knowledge to the ongoing research taking place on the Detroit River. The work on the Detroit River involves the construction of an artificial lake sturgeon spawning reef adjacent to Belle Isle. The trip to Quebec provided an excellent opportunity for Boase to interact with one of the few biologists able to identify habitat required by juvenile lake sturgeon in large connecting waterways of the Great Lakes. The information learned from the biologists in Quebec has direct application to other connecting waterways in the Great Lakes and is vital to our rehabilitation efforts. The visit to Quebec provided a unique opportunity to work in the field with biologists who have been successful at capturing juvenile lake sturgeon in the large connecting waterways of the Great Lakes and provided the opportunity to explain the Service's mission and efforts to restore native fish. In addition, knowledge gained from the trip will aid the Service in focusing its energy and limited resources to rehabilitate lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes. The resulting new partnerships will be invaluable towards these and future efforts.

James C. Boase

### Service Biologist Maps Stocking Trips of M/V Togue



At the request of Assistant Regional Director Gerry Jackson and Jordan River NFH Manager Rick Westerhof, Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena FRO created a GIS based map of trips made by the *M/V Togue* in 2003. The *M/V Togue*, based in Cheboygan, MI, is the Service's offshore stocking vessel used to plant yearling lake trout in US waters of lakes Huron and Michigan in support of interagency lake trout rehabilitation programs.

Biologist Woldt worked with Boat

Captain Mike Perry to obtain coordinates for all waypoints and lake trout stocking locations used by the *M/V Togue* in both lakes Huron and Michigan. Woldt created a map showing *M/V Togue* trip paths, waypoints, stocking locations, total miles traveled, and total number of lake trout stocked in lakes Huron and Michigan. In 2003, the *M/V Togue* traveled 1,090 miles in Lake Huron stocking 1,085,000 yearling lake trout and 1,633

miles in Lake Michigan while planting 1,910,000 yearling lake trout. Woldt formatted a poster sized electronic version of this map and forwarded it to the Regional Office for printing. This map will be used by Region 3 personnel to educate public and Service employees regarding *M/V Togue* operations. This map of 2003 *M/V Togue* stocking trips will allow the Service to educate public and employees regarding the critical role the Service plays in lake trout rehabilitation efforts. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of implementing educational and outreach activities to educate public regarding Service activities.

*Aaron P. Woldt*

## **Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management**

### **Purple Loosestrife and Eurasian Watermilfoil Surveys**



Assistant Project Leader Tracy Hill assisted Thunder Bay Power Manager Brad MacNeill with surveys on Thunder Bay River impoundments to document the presence of purple loosestrife and Eurasian water milfoil. These surveys are conducted annually by Thunder Bay Power as part of their FERC licensing requirements. Hill and MacNeill surveyed waters located below Four mile and Norway Dams.

No new locations of milfoil were discovered, however several new patches of loosestrife were identified. Smaller patches of loosestrife were manually removed, but the larger patches require some sort of additional treatment. Service involvement in this initiative provides an opportunity to minimize the impacts of habitat alteration on fish and other aquatic species from the hydropower facilities. Populations of purple loosestrife were removed and spread of the species was documented.

*Tracy D. Hill*

### **Otsego County Road Crossing Project**

On August 26th, Biologists Susan Wells and Heather Enterline conducted a site visit with the Otsego County Road Commission and Timberline RC&D at a road stream crossing project on a tributary of the Au Sable River. This stream provides habitat for resident brook trout. A low and narrow bridge was installed years ago at the site as a temporary crossing. Because the crossing is improperly designed, large amounts of sediment enter the stream at this point. The gravel road washes out annually and many partners have identified it as a problem site and are requesting assistance from the Service. The amount they are requesting is \$45,000 with a 3:1 match to install a bottomless culvert and seal coat the road approaches to the site. This project will be evaluated to determine if it meets criteria for the Service's Fish Passage Program or other funding sources. This is an example of collaboration between federal, state and local governments and watershed groups to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. The project would be a benefit to native brook trout.

*Susan E. Wells*

### **Construction of Timber Bridge Begins in Northern Michigan Watershed**

Construction officially began August 25 on a timber bridge that will replace two culverts on a northern Michigan watershed. Located on McMasters Creek in the Black River



Watershed, Cheboygan County, this project will remove two ageing culverts and replace them with a timber bridge. Spearheaded by the Alpena FRO Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, planning for this project began in the spring of 2001, when a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant was awarded to the Alpena FRO. Rallying around the NFWF grant, a partnership of Federal, state, and local government agencies and local non-governmental organizations was formed. Repair of this road

crossing will open 12 river- miles of habitat to brook trout, and alleviate the sedimentation input into the creek at the crossing. The timber for this bridge was donated by the State of Michigan, and was harvested from the Pigeon State Forest. Locally milled and treated, the timber bridge will be installed by the Cheboygan County Road Commission. Construction is scheduled for completion by September 19. Twelve river-miles of McMasters Creek, Black River Watershed, will be opened to brook trout passage, and sediment input into downstream reaches of McMasters Creek will be halted by the replacement of two culverts with a timber bridge. Road approaches to the bridge will be hardened with asphalt, and proper ditches and sediment basins will be installed along Clute Road.

*Heather L. Enterline*

### **Busy Field Season for the Alpena FRO Partners Program**

July was a busy month for Alpena FRO Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Coordinator, Heather Enterline. Wetland restoration construction was completed on five sites in Cheboygan, Ogemaw, and Antrim Counties for a total of 15 acres of wetland restored. Nine new initial site visits were completed in six different counties, and stream restoration work crews on the Thunder Bay River, Black River, and Pigeon River were working to restore stream bank erosion sites and improve fish habitat. Several meetings with the Otsego, Montmorency, Antrim, and Cheboygan County Road Commissions resulted in finalization of construction plans and specific dates set for bridge building/culvert replacement projects. Jim Hazelman, Assistant Coordinator for the State of Michigan Partners Program, visited the Alpena FRO July 15-16 to view construction, and assist Enterline with projects. Fifteen acres of wetland were restored on five sites in three counties in Northern Michigan during the month of July. Three watersheds were improved with Partners funding, and nine new site visits were completed. The Partners message was expanded with new landowners, NGO's, and government contacts.

*Heather L. Enterline*

## **Cooperation with Native Americans**

### **Alpena FRO Assists CORA with Lake Whitefish Surveys in 1836 Treaty Waters**

During the month of August, the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA) made an emergency request for help with their fishery independent lake whitefish assessment in 1836 Treaty Waters. The request included the need for a vessel, personnel, and gear to complete the surveys. Fishery Biologists Scott Koproski and Adam Kowalski of the



Alpena FRO traveled to Sault Ste. Marie, MI to assist with the surveys in lake whitefish management units WFH-01, WFH-02, and WFH-03 in Lake Huron and in WFM-03 in Northern Lake Michigan. Two variable mesh gill net gangs of 2700' were fished daily at specified transects within the respective management units. A total of 7 transects, or 14 gill net lifts, were fished while Koproski and Kowalski were assisting CORA. The R/V Karegnondi was used to complete the surveys in cooperation with 2 CORA staff members, Jason Clingamen and Rich Reining. The Modeling Subcommittee (MSC) of the Technical Fisheries Committee (TFC) is responsible for establishing harvest limits for both lake whitefish and lake trout stocks in 1836 Treaty Ceded Waters. The MSC established a uniform protocol for assessing lake whitefish populations in Treaty Ceded Waters. This fishery independent lake whitefish survey yields valuable information that is used by the MSC to model lake whitefish stocks in treaty waters and set safe harvest limits. Alpena FRO's assistance to CORA is a prime example of the Service fulfilling Department of Interior obligations as a signatory to the 2000 Consent Decree for effective management of shared fisheries in 1836 Treaty Ceded Waters.

*Scott R. Koproski*

## **Partnerships and Accountability**

### **Lake Sturgeon Coordination Meeting**



Assistant Project Leader Tracy Hill, Project Leader Jerry McClain and Fishery Biologist James Boase of the Alpena FRO meet with Bruce Manny of the USGS Great Lakes Science Center to coordinate lake sturgeon activities. The USGS and FWS are working jointly in the Detroit and St. Clair Rivers to gather information on lake sturgeon populations in those waters. The purpose for the meeting was to develop work plans for activities planned for 2004 in the Detroit River and to explore opportunities for collaboration on a juvenile lake sturgeon project

that is being conducted in the St. Clair River by the Alpena FRO during fall 2003. A work plan was finalized for the spring 2004 Detroit River work and the Great Lakes Science Center will be assisting Alpena FRO along with other partners on the juvenile lake sturgeon project on the St. Clair River. The Service accomplishes its mission through assisting other agencies in areas where needs exist. Assistance provided to the US Geological Survey Great Lakes Science Center with lake sturgeon studies strengthens partnerships between our agencies and provides a direct benefit to lake sturgeon populations in the Detroit River.

*Tracy D. Hill*

### **Lake Sturgeon Coordination Meeting in Michigan**

Project Leader McClain attended a lake sturgeon coordination meeting in Gaylord on August 13. The meeting, hosted by Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), brought state, federal and university researchers and managers together to discuss ongoing efforts to restore this native Great Lakes species to Michigan waters of the Great Lakes. Participants provided updates on research and management efforts

throughout Michigan. McClain provided an overview of lake sturgeon restoration activities being conducted by the Alpena Fishery Resources Office in Lake Huron and the connecting waterways. Also participating in the meeting were biologists from the MDNR Sturgeon Management Team, researchers from Michigan State University and Lake Superior State University, a representative from Sturgeon for Tomorrow, as well as John Weisser from the Service's Sea Lamprey Control program. These meetings are excellent opportunities to enhance interagency coordination and collaboration for basin wide restoration efforts. This activity will facilitate Service efforts to work in cooperation and collaboration with partners to restore lake sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes ecosystem.

*Jerry R. McClain*

## **Public Use**

### **Alpena FRO Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Speaker at Wildlife Workshop**

Alpena FRO Fish and Wildlife Biologist Heather Enterline gave a presentation showcasing the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and its benefits to private landowners at a July 29 "Wildlife Workshop", sponsored by the Huron Pines Resource, Conservation & Development (RC&D) Office. The workshop was held in Harrisville, Michigan, and was organized to familiarize Alcona County landowners with the various federal programs available to them. Other speakers included representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service (fisheries division), and the Huron Pines RC&D Office. Forty landowners attended the workshop, and several expressed an interest in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Alcona County riparian landowner along the Pine/VanEtten River Watersheds were invited to attend a Wildlife Workshop. These landowners were introduced to the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and how this program can benefit fish and wildlife on their property. Forty landowners attended the workshop, and several requested Service Biologist Heather Enterline visit their property to see if they qualify for the program.

*Heather L. Enterline*

### **Rifle River Restoration Committee Meeting**

Fishery Biologist James Boase traveled to Sterling, Michigan on July 30, 2003 to attend the Rifle River Restoration Committee Meeting. Boase gave a PowerPoint presentation titled "Lake Sturgeon Rehabilitation Efforts in the Great Lakes". The 30 minute presentation was attended by approximately 55 members of the group. The two main focal points presented were; current efforts to establish new lake sturgeon spawning sites in the connecting channels between Lakes Huron and Erie and what sturgeon spawning sites in smaller tributaries such as the Rifle River might appear like. The goal of the meeting was to inform members about the potential of providing lake sturgeon spawning habitat while at the same time stabilizing areas impacted by erosion on the Rifle River. The presentation was well received by members of the group. The forum was an excellent opportunity for Boase to explain how the Alpena FRO is working with state and local governing bodies as well as private citizens to rehabilitate lake sturgeon populations throughout the Great lakes. This presentation provided an excellent opportunity to explain to the public the Service's mission and efforts to restore native fish. Specifically, the presentation focused on efforts to rehabilitate lake sturgeon populations in the Great

Lakes and the role that the Fishery Resources Offices have in this endeavor. The benefits of native species restoration were clearly defined and explained. The presentation was also an excellent outreach opportunity.

*James C. Boase*

## **Leadership in Science and Technology**

### **MOCC and Open Water Module at Alpena FRO**



Motorboat Operator Certification Course (MOCC) Open Water Module Instructors Adam Kowalski (Alpena FRO), Stewart Cogswell (Green Bay FRO), John Decker (LE Special Agent), Tim Peiffer (Marquette Biological Station), Kyle Krysiak (Marquette Biological Station), and Bob Clevenstine (Rock Island FO) put on a two day open water course and MOCC refresher at the Alpena FRO on August 21 and 22. The Open Water Module was established in Region 3 in 2002 and is designed to give training

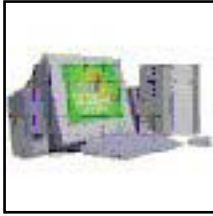
to DOI employees who operate and/or work on vessels in open water. The open water module was created because the basic MOCC course did not meet the training needs of employees who work on large, open bodies of water. The following topics were covered during the course: navigating using only a chart and charting tools, operating a global positioning system (GPS) unit, using a marine radio correctly, surviving in the water, using floatation devices correctly, anchoring correctly, required and recommended equipment for open water vessels, how to obtain current weather conditions before boating, changing a propeller while the vessel is still in the water, how to right a capsized vessel, and a demonstration of a Coast Guard helicopter performing rescue operations. The basic MOCC course does not cover many of the above topics. Instructors also gave students practical exercises in boat handling, charting, navigating, and radio operation. Overall this course was a success, and all students successfully completed the training. Students reported that they learned a great deal and feel that this course should be taken by everyone operating on open water. Students also fulfilled the 5 year DOI training requirement for boat safety training by completing this course. Open water and MOCC refresher training are valuable curricula designed to make Service personnel competent and safe boaters. Teaching MOCC courses is consistent with the Service's goal of providing employees with opportunities to maintain competencies, improve opportunities for professional achievement, and safely perform their jobs.

*Adam T. Kowalski*

## **Workforce Management**

### **More Alpena FRO computer upgrades**

During the first week of August, Administrative Technician Debra Turner upgraded more Alpena FRO computers. Fishery Biologist Jim Boase works downstate and his computer, laptop, scanner, printer, and digital camera were brought to the Alpena FRO office to be upgraded. Office XP was installed on both computers, desktop and laptop. The computers



were checked to ensure that Norton was up-to-date and all critical updates were installed. The scanner, printer and camera were set up to work on the desktop. Previously these items were not working on this system and Jim was unable to access the Accomplishment Reporting System. With these upgrades all items and systems are now operational. This upgrade will improve productivity in accessing and downloading information, both internally and externally, for this employee and is consistent with the Service's Fisheries Vision for Workforce Management.

*Debra L. Turner*